



350971

December 15, 1972

SURJECT: LANDFILL SITE (GARBAGE DUMP) AT YORKHOUSE & MCAREE ROADS
OPERATED BY T-K DISPOSAL UNDER CONTRACT WITH CITY OF WAUKEGAN
ON LAND RECENTLY PURCHASED BY THE WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT
AND THEREUPON ANNEXED TO THE CITY OF WAUKEGAN

SITE LOCATION:

The property is in a residential area which, except for the Landfill Site, is outside the corporate limits of the City. The Site is bounded on the east by McAree Road with Bevier Park (Waukegan Park District) immediately across the road. Bevier Park, while not yet completed, is in operation and attracts a great many children from great distances due to the facilities already established. The Site is in the path of a natural watershed with drainage into the Site from the north, west, and some from the south. A map identified as "Zion Quadrangle" available from the Office of the Regional Planning Commission, Lake County Courthouse, Waukegan, clearly shows this watershed as well as a fairly large "flood plain" in the east end of the Site, with a larger "flood plain" immediately across McAree Road where a large lagoon has been dug within the confines of Bevier Park. This lagoon discharges into a creek flowing thru a densely populated residential area and on into and thru the Bonnie Brook Golf Course.

HISTORY OF LANDFILL SITE TO DATE:

The first indication most residents had that something might be "in the wind" for the site in question was the appearance of heavy earth-moving equipment, relocated from the Bevier Park site where grading had just been completed. When it was discovered that this was to be a landfill site, strong objections were voiced by many residents in the area to no avail. At this point the City Offices let it be known that the landfill site would be an operation using the latest techniques in what was described as a "cell-type" method of deposit, with no garbage left uncovered over night. Effective controls would be used to eliminate dust, dirt, odors, rats and rodents, and the possibility of flooding conditions. Also, the word was passed out that when the landfill was completed, the area would be properly graded and become a "quiet" park, with walk-ways, benches, trees, shrubbery, etc., tailored to the needs of adults. This was intended to complement the "active" Bevier Park which has been equipped with tennis courts, ball diamonds, paddle boats for the lagoon, etc. These reports effectively forestalled "organized" action by the still disgruntled residents of the area.

Application to operate the "dump" was filed by the City in April, 1970. The News-Sun Newspaper quoted Waukegan Mayor Robert Sisonjian to the effect that the site had a computed capacity of 800,000 cu. yds. and would serve Waukegan for "five plus" years. The contract with T-K Disposal was quoted as specifically authorizing the contractor to collect trash from North Chicago and outside the City of Waukegan and from private scavengers. The Contractor can collect 70¢ a cu. yd. from "outsiders", retaining those collections as his compensation for the "low" contract price with the City of Waukegan.

The "five plus" landfill has now been filled in about 2-1/2 years, which confirms a report by a Lake County Commission publication in September, 1971, indicating the additional life of this dump to be about one year. Simple arithmetic would seem to indicate that 400,000 cu. yds. of trash has been accepted from "outside Waukegan" which, at 70¢ a cu. yd., would be about \$280,000 to the T-K Disposal Co. as added compensation for their "low" trash pickup contract with the City of Waukegan. They had replaced National Disposal in the Waukegan operation of trash pickup due to a bid \$25,000 per year lower.

In addition to the site's location in the course of a watershed to effectively create unnatural flooding conditions, the offal from this trash deposit drains into the Bevior Park Lagoon, a natural attraction for children, compounded by the availability of the boat rental. Liquid drainage from a garbage dump would seem to be less than safe when splashed on bare arms, legs, faces, and possibly in eyes. The outlet creek, with the same drainage, now provides the same hazard to the children in the densely populated area through which it runs.

The "modern" operation is a bitter disappointment to the residents who have had to tolerate the insufferable conditions for 2-1/2 years. Where they enjoyed the sight of pheasants, rabbits, and other wild-life, they are now subjected to the presence of large rats (pictures have been taken of several caught in homes in the area) and giant squirrels, attracted by the garbage and the unnatural flooded areas created. The pungent odors given off clearly identify the site as a garbage dump. No attempt to control dust and dirt is apparent. The fine black ash, used for temporary walkways in the site, is not watered. That dust infiltrates all homes in the area even though doors and windows are kept tightly closed. Many residents in the area have installed air conditioners where they had never before needed it, but still the black dust comes in. That same dust attacks swimming pool liners and cannot be removed. At least one resident found it necessary to have his plastic liner replaced due to this condition. Stagnant, dirty water is now standing near homes where none had collected in the last 18 to 20 years before. No attempt has been made to alleviate this condition in many areas. Where an attempt was made, on the north side, the ditch dug has not corrected but has compounded the problem.

The holes for trash deposit have been dug by a chain-shovel, about 30 feet deep with almost vertical sides. No protection in the form of benches or gronds has been provided. These holes are many times left open and unguarded at night and over week-ends. Children, with the innocent lack of fear of the young, crouch over the edges of these water-filled pits, throwing rocks and clay into the depths. If a child should fall into these pits, he could not extricate himself due to the water in the bottom and the vertical sides. The Patron Saint of little children must have worked overtime to prevent a fatality on this project. Mountains of excess clay about 15 feet high cover all but a small area open with no attempt to remove the dirt and so corrupt the soil when the site to a grade compatible with its original design.

IN SHORT, THE "SECRET" AND SPEED WITH WHICH THIS SITE WAS OBTAINED AND DUMPING BEGAN TO FORESTALL EFFECTIVE PREVENTIVE ACTION BY RESIDENTS, THE UNSANITARY AND UNSAFE OPERATION OF THE SITE, AND THE LACK OF CONCERN TO TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION HAS NOW UNITED OVER 200 RESIDENTS OF THE AREA IN A COMMON CAUSE.

PROPOSED 75 FT HIGH GARBAGE HILL FOR SKI AND SLED HILL:

An article in the local newspaper (News-Sun) was the first indication that additional garbage was to be inflicted on this long-suffering neighborhood, in the form of an above-the-ground garbage dump. At this point, plans had already been formulated and the required request for a permit from the EPA was already in process. This is in line with the methods used in implementing the initial landfill operation 2-1/2 years ago. This procedure conforms to the Waukegan Mayor's policy of preserving secrecy regarding additional landfill operations. That policy was documented in an article in the News-Sun, reporting the Mayor to say "every time we pick one, we run into a hornet's nest. I'm not going to give people 1-1/2 years to level their guns at the City of Waukegan". While the lack of concern for people and their environment is apparent, the truth of the statement cannot be questioned.

The patently inept management of the current garbage fill, the lack of concern for the insufferable environment created for area residents, demonstrated disregard for the safety of children, and no action (or even a commitment) to remove the mountains of dirt and return the site to some semblance of its original condition, are the only meaningful criteria available to judge the performance of the Contractor and the City in operating the proposed above-the-ground garbage pile. In fact, the conditions inherent in that kind of operation would seem to be far more demanding than the below-ground garbage fill. The garbage slope is planned for the west end of the site, the high end at the south border with the low end at the north limits. This will put a mountain of garbage directly across the normal drainage from the west, south, and partially from the north. This, at the very least, would seem to violate all the laws of common sense, let alone any principles of environmental control.

The proposed "Ski and Sled" hill has now been renamed a "Toboggan and Sled" hill, since skis and sleds are obviously incompatible, an extremely dangerous combination. This slope, measuring the mountains of excess dirt are sometime removed, is also a natural attraction for motorbikes and minibikes in summer and for snowmobiles in winter. The operation of these noise-makers, probably until all hours of the night, is, of itself, more than sufficient reason to object strongly to the proposed installation.

Objection to this operation and its proposed continuance have been delivered to the local governmental bodies in the form of a petition signed by approx. 200 area residents, and in personal appearances before the Waukegan City Council, their Committees, and the Waukegan Park Board, their Director, and their Chairman. The petition has also been sent to the Environmental Inspector of the State of Illinois, along with one copy to the County General Scott's Office, in Springfield and to Champaign.

A Petition of Variance has been submitted by the City of Waukegan requesting approval to dump additional garbage above-ground in the Yorkhouse-McCree Site. Objections must be forwarded to the Variance Section of the EPA by December 18th for evaluation. A flood of objections is expected to be forwarded by residents in this area.

THE "RESTLESS" NATIVES ARE NOW THOROUGHLY AROUSED AND HAVE ORGANIZED TO ERING AN END TO DUMPING GARAGE IN THIS AREA AND PROMOTE CORRECTIVE ACTION TO UNDO THE DAMAGE ALREADY INFILCTED ON THIS SITE, THIS AREA, AND THE RESIDENTS WHO HAVE HAD TO TOLERATE THESE CONDITIONS FOR SO LONG.

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